

The Development of Modern Design Methods

through an Actor-Network Theory (ANT) Analysis of the Pre-modern Social Customs of Japan

Nagoya, Japan



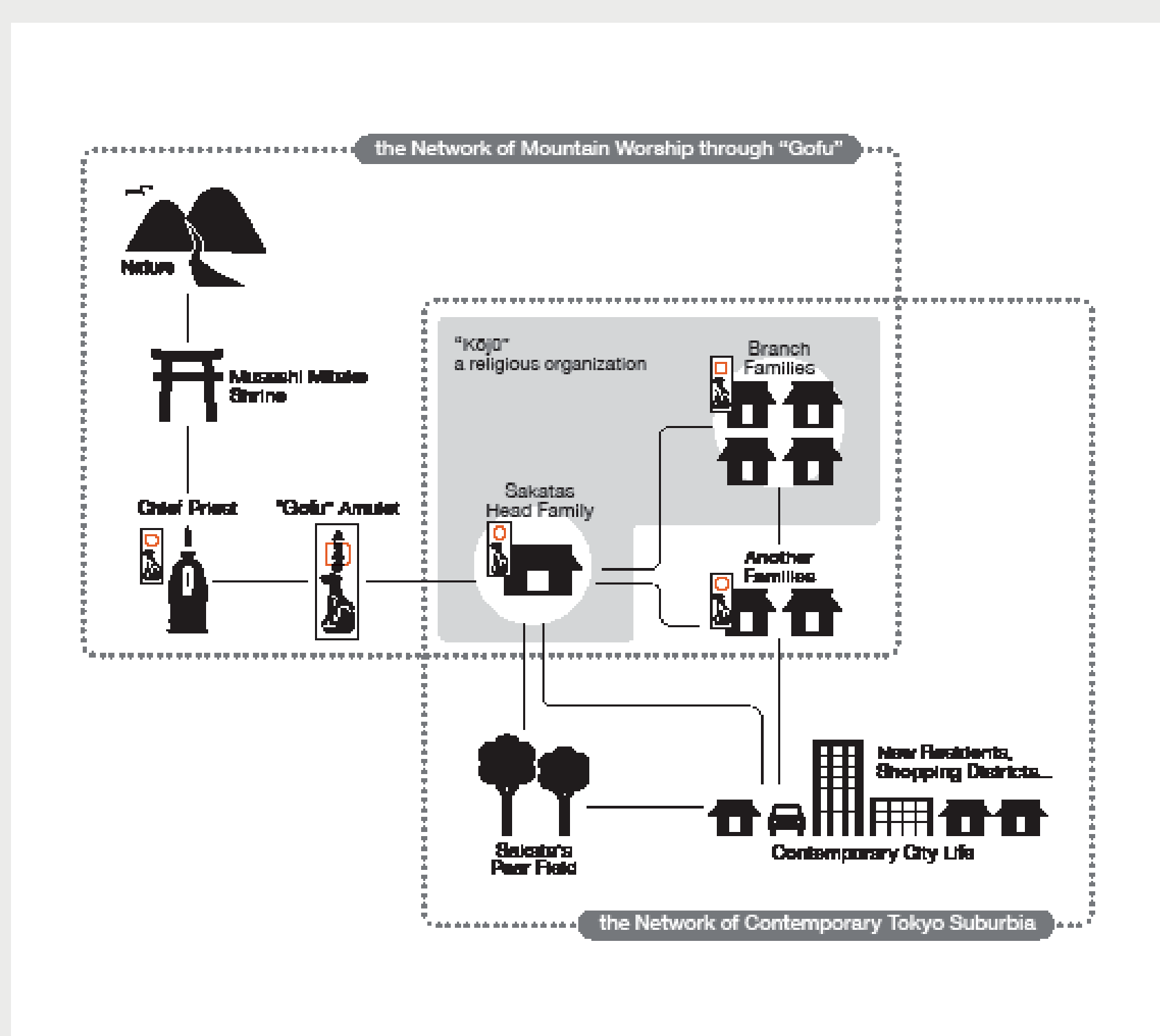
Actor-Network Theory for Design Methods

We believe it is possible to find elements of pre-modern customs and wisdom that offer important design methods appropriate to complex modern times, but that have been overlooked as outdated. In pre-modern customs and traditional practices, one can find structures for handling risk as a whole community, methods for community maintenance, and ways of connecting individuals, society, and tradition.

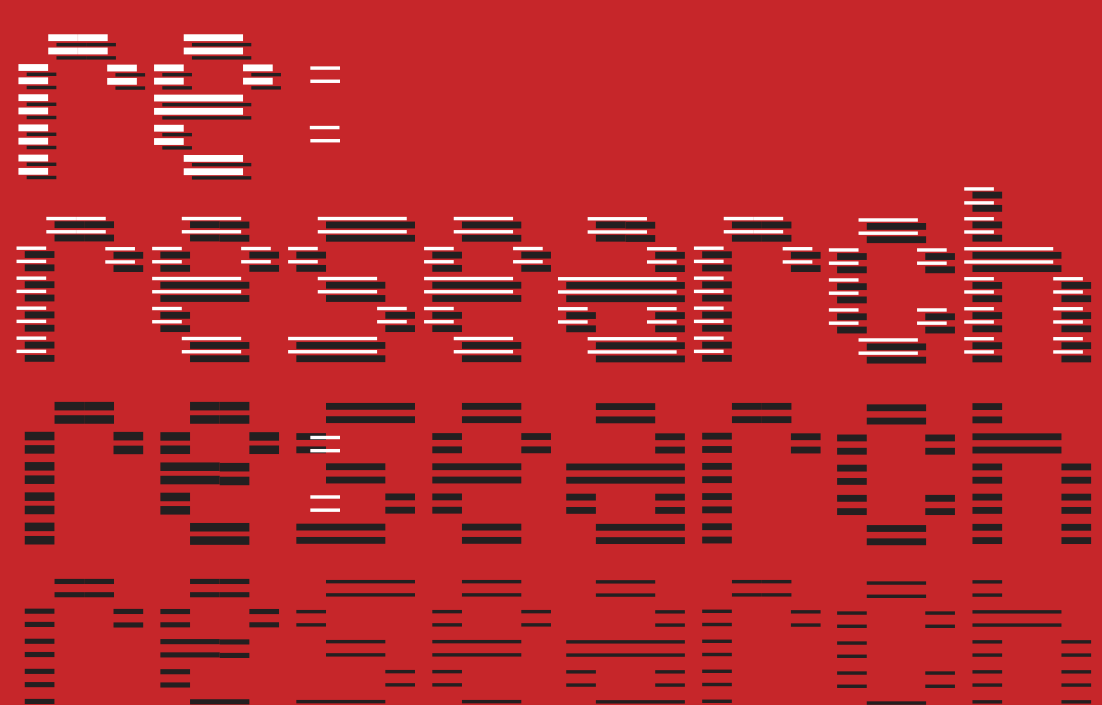
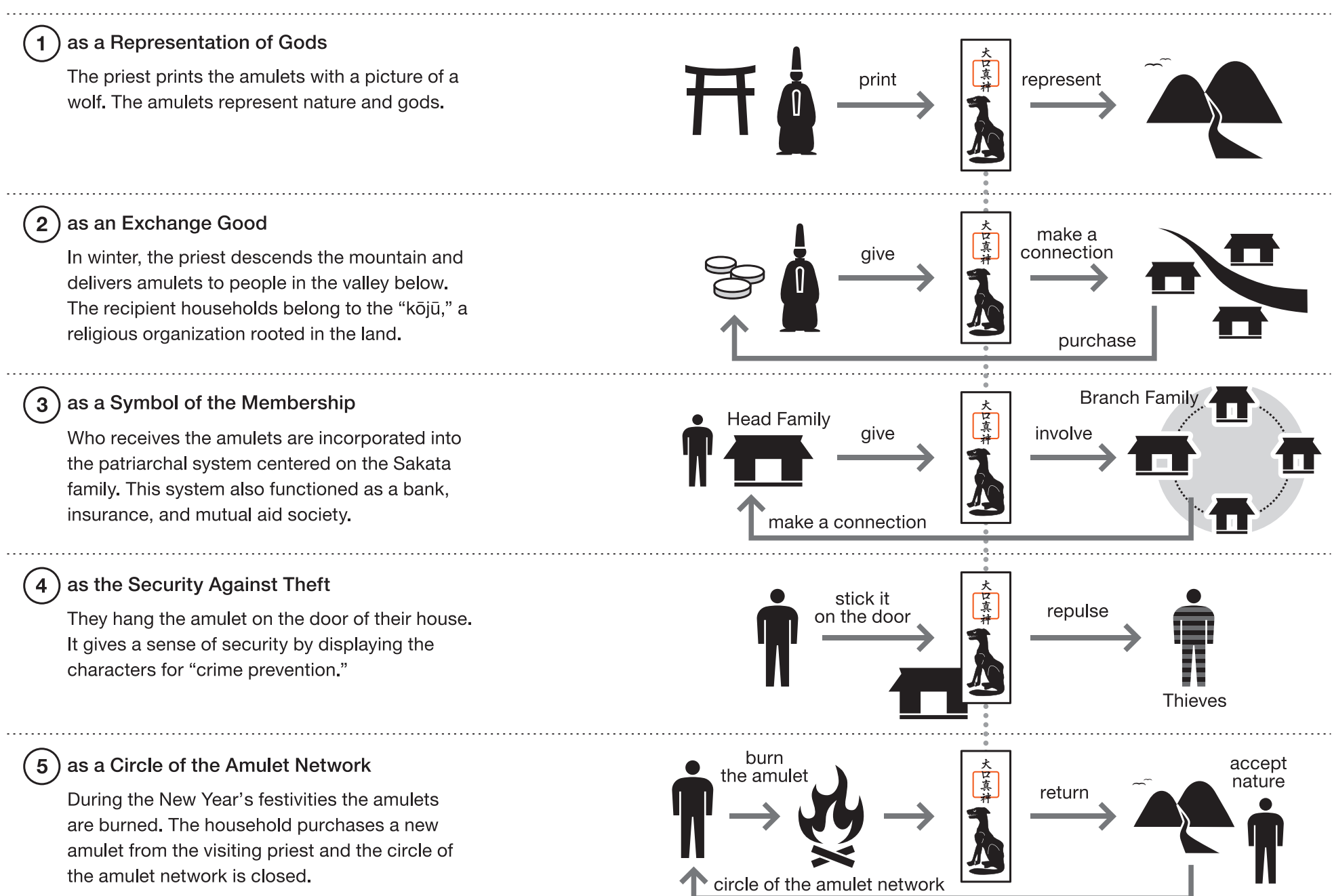
Under the conditions of modernity, in which foundational structures that have long been taken for granted, such as social norms and traditions, now shake and tremble, this way of thinking is an appropriate approach to the highly complex problems afflicting modern society, such as the devastation of the mental environment, and environmental problems that go on without solution. Since modernity took hold, design has played a social role by discovering social problems and developing goods and systems to address them. However, regarding the problems of modernity, not only has design failed to present fundamental solutions, it is also part of the social structures that cause such problems. Is this not because design is itself bound by the law of causality, and thus to modern methodologies? Approaches conforming to the law of causality cannot cope with the set of complex problems in which relationships between cause and effect are unclear. Therefore, new design methodologies are necessary.

In this research, we use Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to analyze a case study in the municipal suburbs outside Tokyo. By doing so, we show how it is possible to understand complex relationships and apply pre-modern systems to modern life. The purpose of this research is to use that juxtaposition to develop a method that leads to a more concrete approach to finding the social and technical elements necessary for the present age.

The Network of two layers in Tokyo Suburbia



The Transition of the Role of "Gofu" Amulet



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